A TRIBUTE TO ONE OF MY DEAREST FRIENDS, THELMA PAULINE MILLER—MAY SHE REST IN PEACE

HON. GLENN POSHARD

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 24, 1997

Mr. POSHARD. Mr. Speaker, I would like to pay tribute to one of my dearest friends, Thelma Pauline Miller. She passed away on July 27th, leaving a legacy of kindness and consideration that will be remembered by all who knew her. Pauline was not just a great friend of mine, but a friend to the entire community of Herrin, IL. Born on January 23, 1918 in Brookport, IL, Pauline was married for 43 years to Carl Miller, who served as Williamson County Sheriff. Carl preceded her in death as did her parents, Bryan and Clara Johnson, and her sister Geraldine Burgoon.

Pauline touched many people through her devoted work to numerous causes. She was never afraid to roll up her sleeves and get the job done, contributing her time to the Business and Professional Women's Club, Win One Class, First Christian Church in Herrin, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary and Eagles Auxiliary. She was also active in politics, serving as a Democrat State central committeeman and as Williamson County chairwoman. Professionally, Pauline worked for the Department of Unemployment for 12 years.

Pauline will be remembered by many people whose lives she graced over the years. She is survived by a loving family, including her daughter Linda, son, John, brother Howard Eugene, five grandchildren, and two great grandchildren. May God bless her family, and I know that the spirit with which she lived her life will be with us for some time to come.

FOOD SAFETY

HON. LEE H. HAMILTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 24, 1997

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to insert my Washington Report for Wednesday, September 24, 1997, into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

IS YOUR SUPPER SAFE? U.S. FOOD SAFETY POLICY

Many Hoosiers have asked me if the food we eat is safe. Recent news reports on tainted hamburger, contaminated fruits and vegetables, and the impact of microbes on certain fish have renewed concern about the safety of our food supply. People are paying closer attention to food safety, and they are demanding that government and industry deal with those threats.

We continue to have one of the safest food supplies in the world. Publicity about contaminated food is one side-effect of a safer food supply—scientists are better-equipped to identify, trace, and warn consumers about possible risks. At the same time, our enormous food production chain can spread foodborne disease faster and farther than ever before. Food is often processed in huge factories in one state and shipped and eaten by individuals around the country, with plenty of opportunities for mishandling along the way.

Many of these food dangers are difficult to detect. E. Coli, salmonella, and other threats continue despite stronger meat inspection procedures. Vast amounts of imported foods treated with pesticides are entering U.S. markets uninspected. Several steps are needed to improve food safety.

EDUCATION

We need better consumer education. The most important step consumers can take is to prepare foods correctly. Fruits and vegetables should be washed thoroughly. Ground beef should be heated thoroughly to kill E. Coli and other bacteria. Poultry and eggs should be cooked fully to avoid salmonella, and surfaces that come into contact with raw poultry should be immediately cleaned. In fact, the number one cause of salmonella is preparing fruits and vegetables at home on surfaces that have been in contact with raw poultry. USDA offers free advice on safe food preparation on a toll-free hotline (1–800/535–4555).

SAFER PESTICIDES

We should make pesticides safer. Since World War II, agrichemicals have been a key factor in U.S. agricultural productivity—controlling weeds and insects, and boosting crop yields. Yet by definition pesticides are toxic and can pose health risks. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) decides which pesticides can be used, but hundreds of pesticides were approved long before we had the technology to assess their risks. It is estimated that these older pesticides constitute 90% of the dietary risk facing the public. Last year Congress reformed pesticide laws to encourage EPA to balance the risks and benefits of newer pesticides. This change should accelerate approval of safer pesticides to replace older ones.

BETTER INSPECTION

Government food inspection, which is currently divided between the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), can be improved. Questions have been raised about illegal pesticides on the market, enforcement against violators has not been strong enough, and FDA tests less than 1% of food shipments. FDA inspections should be strengthened.

Meat and poultry sold in the United States must be inspected by USDA. Meat inspection legislation, which dates back to 1906, is far stricter than the FDA's rules for other foods. Each and every slaughtered animal is inspected by a federal inspector for visual contamination. If USDA has reason to believe a food or processing plant is unsanitary, it can suspend federal inspection—which amounts to shutting the plant down. USDA has used this authority to encourage companies to recall risky products and to insist on changes in processing methods. USDA does not currently have the authority to order a recall by itself.

In 1996, USDA began a program to modernize its meat inspection techniques. The old system, sometimes known as ''poke and sniff'', relied largely on sight, smell, and touch. While the system has worked reasonably well, it is not so effective at detecting invisible pathogens such as E. Coli. The new Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) system will use scientific testing at a series of key points in meat processing. Inspectors will be better able to locate problems before they contaminate large amounts of food. The completed HACCP system should greatly increase our ability to prevent food contamination.

ANIMAL AND PLANT RESEARCH

We should increase research on the causes and cures of food contamination. Animals are natural carriers of bacteria, but research indicates that certain feeds or antibiotics may greatly reduce the amount of harmful bacteria that are produced. New farming techniques and genetic research also offer new ways to reduce the use of pesticides. Some researchers, for example, have identified ''good'' bacteria that kill E. Coli inside a living animal. Others have developed crops with their own natural pesticides—reducing chemical risk and the cost of production. Congress should devote more attention to research aimed at preventing food-borne diseases.

IRRADIATION

One technique gaining attention is food irradiation. Low doses of gamma rays can kill pathogens and extend shelf-life dramatically. The FDA has approved irradiation for pork, poultry, and produce. A similar proposal for beef is pending. Irradiation does not make food radioactive. It does not change a product's appearance or taste. Many hospitals serve irradiated foods, as do more than 40 countries. Irradiation has been deemed safe by the American Medical Association, the American Dietetic Association, and the World Health Organization. Yet consumers are reluctant to buy irradiated food, and food processors have not widely adopted irradiation. Some consumer groups argue that irradiation is more costly than improving production practices. Irradiation can also kill ''good'' bacteria, which often help digestion or fight other diseases. However, irradiation appears to be an effective way to increase food safety. We should increase research and consumer knowledge about this important technique.

CONCLUSION

Helping to ensure a safe and healthy food supply is one of government's fundamental responsibilities. Current policies have succeeded by providing a relatively safe food supply at a reasonable cost. Proper food preparation is the most important step, but consumers have a right to demand a more modern system. With common sense and new technology, the United States should continue to have one of the safest food supplies in the world.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE REVEREND DR. ROBERT LOWERY

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 24, 1997

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is my great pleasure to congratulate the Reverend Dr. Robert Lowery on the 40-year anniversary of his dedicated service to St. Timothy Community Church in Gary, IN. Dr. Lowery will be honored by St. Timothy Church during a 3-day anniversary celebration, which will include a gala banquet to be held at St. Timothy Community Church on Saturday, September 27, 1997, at 6 p.m. The banquet, which is entitled ''A Tribute: The Man and His Message,'' will be in honor of Dr. Lowery's service to his parish, as well as his demonstrated commitment to improving the communities of northwest Indiana.

On September 27, 1957, Dr. Lowery began his ministry at St. Timothy Community Church as an interim pastor armed with several degrees and an enthusiasm for serving the community. With a masters of divinity from Garret Theological Seminary and a doctorate of ministry from Chicago Theological Seminary, Dr.